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## **Challenges in the Area of Immigration, Integration and Security**

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**Andrea Witt<sup>1</sup>**

## **Challenges in the Area of Immigration, Integration and Security**

German Marshall Fund has for years been interested in the area of immigration and integration. We are a transatlantic organization focused on fostering transatlantic dialogue between Europe and the United States. One of GMF's longstanding policy initiatives has been in the area of migration. During the past several decades, Europe and the United States have experienced record levels of immigration. No receiving country has been fully prepared for the challenges and opportunities that increased immigration poses for societies. Areas of concern include legal and undocumented migration, asylum and refugee policies, remittance and transnationalism, human trafficking, and humanitarian issues. Post-9/11, immigration debates have increasingly turned attention to security concerns and foreign policy priorities.

GMF's Immigration and Integration program seeks to enhance understanding of the consequences of increased immigration among policy and decision makers, opinion leaders, the media, and civil society organization. GMF also strives to help shape the relationship between Islam and the West in order to improve integration of democratic Muslim communities. GMF does both largely through its Key Institution grantmaking program, through which GMF provides institutional support for comparative research and its dissemination on immigration and integration policies. GMF is a hybrid organization and acts simultaneously as a grant-maker, a cosponsor and an operational institution. We are organizing a variety of migration-related events such as fellowships, study tours, journalism trips, conferences and seminars.

The Center for International Relations in Warsaw is one of GMF's Key Institutions and partners. I am very glad to that CIR decided to research and debate the important and timely issues of "Security dilemmas and options for immigration policies" in a transatlantic framework with a focus on Central and Eastern Europe. The new EU member states, while currently changing from being sending countries to transition and lately even immigration receiving countries are simultaneously

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battling with the notion of new European security concerns and policy initiatives, national demands and new border challenges concerning their Eastern neighbours.

In the wake of the terrorist attacks in New York, Madrid and London, national security concerns have become of utmost importance across Europe and the United States. Especially the fields of legal and illegal immigration and immigration policies are strongly intertwined in the discussion of national security and make further research and dialogues like this one today necessary. Estimates assume that roughly half a million people annually enter the European Union without documentation which is roughly the same number of illegal migrants who annually cross the US-Mexican border. This poses both a security threat and a human rights problem as many of these people are smuggled and trafficked.

This project therefore touches an increasingly important subject emphasizing the connection between national security and migration policy in the European and American experience. In addition to the problem of illegals, both continents struggle with the desire to incorporate a comprehensive migration reform. Whereas the American immigration policy is currently “under construction” and future plans on how to proceed with illegal immigrants and their incorporation into the labour market are highly controversial and disputed, Europe is gearing up on issues concerning security technology in order to control immigration flows and illegal entries across Europe’s borders.

In November this year, members of the 25 EU-countries will come together in Barcelona to critically review the progress made since the 1995 Barcelona Declaration which strived to establish strong political and security partnership in the Euro-Mediterranean basin. France and Spain already proposed to create an agreement with Morocco for joint police and justice activities. This was introduced as an anti-terror policy but is primarily geared towards preventing illegal migration. In short, the Barcelona Process which was originally planned as an initiative to enhance prosperity, economic development and peace and dialogue around the Mediterranean now functions as a framework for new transnational security policies in order to direct immigration flows.

This is not the only initiative. If you scan newspapers over the past weeks, plenty of new policies ideas have been introduced in order to increase border control and security in Europe:

Greece considers launching satellites to monitor the country's borders for illegal immigrants.

Italian Interior Minister Giuseppe Pisanu demands stronger cooperation of the EU against illegal immigration after latest refugee tragedy.

Germany's Otto Schilly's proposal for stronger cooperation with North African countries and so-called refugee camps is gaining positive attention among his European colleagues.

However, few of these initiatives take a truly comprehensive approach beyond the notion of increased border control. If you look at the experience at the US-Mexico border over the past 10 years, beefed-up control measurements and a steady increase of border troops is obviously not the right strategy for success. We need smarter and comprehensive controls including cooperation with sending and transitional countries. Also, border policies need to take bigger migration push-and-pull factors into consideration such as labour market demands.

Also, a very recent study from the Pew Hispanic Center showed that post 9/11-security policies in the U.S. indeed impacted migration patterns but in a most undesirable and unintended way: Legal migration to the United States has declined (unintentionally) since 2001. However, this gap was picked-up by illegal migration which responded to labour market demands and kept the overall migration flows constant. Instead of strengthening security, post 9/11-policies did indeed increase insecurity and weakened control over who comes into the country. This is a dooming example of how easily well-intended yet hastily implemented border and safekeeping policies have the opposite effect and negatively impact both migration patterns and security demands.

Uncoordinated and harmful developments also threaten to impact Europe these days. The negative notion of a "Fortress Europe" got reinforced by the terrible pictures from sub-Saharan Africans trying to climb the barbed-wired fences around

the Spanish enclave Melilla in Morocco. Melilla seems like a worst-case scenario of conflicting and confusing migration and refugee policies, unilateral solutions and uncoordinated security measurements creating both a terrible humanitarian crisis and new migration pressures in the transition and receiving countries. Once again this situation reinforces the need for the EU and its member states to cooperate not only with transit countries such as Morocco, but also with sending countries such as Nigeria, Mali, and Ghana. Overall, it has immensely increased the pressure for comprehensive security and migration reform.

I am therefore particularly happy that the project 'Transatlantic security challenges and dilemmas for the European immigration policy' just initiated by CIR addresses not only hard issues of very valid homeland security concerns and transnational terrorism threats, but also acknowledges the issues of people smuggling and human trafficking which create grave human tragedies and also pose security risks. According to a report of the IOM more than 200.000 people have become victims of human trafficking rings in Europe between 2000 and 2004.

I want to wish us all a fruitful and challenging work and exchange of ideas and allow me one last wish: I hope that Germany's undecided political situation will not turn into a lasting security concern for Europe and worldwide!

## Center for International Relations

### WHO WE ARE?

The Center for International Relations (CIR) is an independent, non-governmental establishment dedicated to the study of Polish foreign policy as well as those international political issues, which are of crucial importance to Poland. The Center's primary objective is to offer political counselling, to describe Poland's current international situation, and to continuously monitor the government's foreign policy moves. The CIR prepares reports and analyses, holds conferences and seminars, publishes books and articles, carries out research projects and supports working groups. Over the last few years, we have succeeded in attracting a number of experts, who today cooperate with the CIR on a regular basis. Also, we have built up a forum for foreign policy debate for politicians, MPs, civil servants, local government officials, journalists, academics, students and representatives of other NGOs. The CIR is strongly convinced that, given the foreign policy challenges Poland is facing today, it ought to support public debates on international issues in Poland.

The president of the Center for International Relations is Mr Eugeniusz Smolar.

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